

## STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA CLASS SPECIFICATION

**Class Title: Information Officer**

**Class Code: 11723**

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### **A. Purpose:**

Information Officers are responsible for an assigned agency's communication needs, including planning, writing, designing, editing, and producing a wide range of effective communication products such as informational and educational projects, printed material, web pages, press releases, speeches and presentations, and other public information projects.

### **B. Distinguishing Feature:**

Information Officers prepare and implement complete information project plans and budgets, and work independently with minimal oversight from supervisors; and work in agencies where there is no Information Supervisor.

Information Specialists develop informational communications and publications within professional standards and established department guidelines, and under direct supervisory review.

Information Supervisors administer a department's information program and supervise information staff.

### **C. Functions:**

*(These are examples only; any one position may not include all of the listed examples nor do the listed examples include all functions which may be found in positions of this class.)*

1. Develops and implements promotional plans to promote and market department programs and services to the public.
  - a. Allocates appropriated funds effectively; seeks gratis promotional opportunities and avenues to expand limited resources; and coordinates promotional efforts with other entities to make the best use of available resources.
  - b. Develops on-air graphics, set designs, scripts, and producer materials for television and radio promotions.
  - c. Works with writers and graphic designers to develop promotional materials.
  - d. Maintains working relationships with media resources who assist in promotional efforts.
  - e. Develops special promotional events by developing schedules and details, event budgets, and finding community partners to help sponsor and promote department activities.
2. Develops and implements promotional and educational projects that meet program goals and objectives and comply with appropriate standards and regulations.
  - a. Establishes an annual plan of activities which includes creating new projects, and recommendations for changes in current projects and activities.
    - i. Designs goal-specific projects.
    - ii. Creates new, and updates existing, pamphlets, training materials, educational brochures, etc.
    - iii. Consults with printers on design, layout, and distribution of printed materials.
  - b. Develops curriculums for presenting educational and promotional materials, and conducts training for educators and consumers.
  - c. Maintains reference materials, extends resources to the public and private entities, and monitors industry trends and developments to keep materials current.
  - d. Manages promotional activities for trade shows, the State Fair, health fairs,

educational forums, etc., by allocating funds, creating and ordering materials, setting up and dismantling displays, and scheduling and supervising workers.

3. Develops and maintains web sites to ensure department information is easily accessible and current.
  - a. Analyzes department functions to determine ways to make them more efficient by using internet and intranet.
  - b. Meets with staff to discuss and analyze processes in place; aids in collecting data to determine which processes can be done electronically; and adapts processes to web sites.
  - c. Creates new web sites and web pages and updates existing ones, organizes information and balances web site appearances to meet established standards for development.
  - d. Works as a liaison between the department and programmers for development of web applications.
  - e. Evaluates requests for placing material on the web and determines whether or not the requests are justified.
  - f. Recommends priorities for web sites, and participates on project teams to provide guidance in web site development.
4. Plans and produces department publications and media events to provide information about the department, its purpose, and the services it provides to the public.
  - a. Plans and organizes each issue of department magazines and correlates them with department activities at the time of publication.
    - i. Plans and solicits story ideas a year in advance.
    - ii. Delegates writing assignments to department personnel.
    - iii. Determines and coordinates photo needs for each issue.
    - iv. Conducts final edits.
    - v. Oversees printing and distribution.
  - b. Plans, develops, and produces printed materials by meeting with staff to discuss project focus, writing and designing publications, preparing printing specifications, coordinating bidding processes, and coordinating printing and distribution.
  - c. Writes, edits, and publishes newsletters and news releases and distributes them to the media and the department web site.
    - i. Plans design and layout of newsletters with graphic designers.
    - ii. Meets with and assists program managers in selecting topics.
    - iii. Manages electronic list server of e-mail subscribers.
    - iv. Delegates writing and photography assignments.
    - v. Develops an annual schedule for newsletters.
  - d. Reviews and edits publications and other materials written by others.
  - e. Organizes and schedules news conferences, and informs the media of news events.
  - f. Develops and manages a printing schedule for continuous publications.
5. Performs administrative tasks to support information program activities.
  - a. Develops and recommends policies and procedures.
  - b. Ensures informational products comply with state and federal laws and rules.
  - c. Develops budget requests for new projects, and monitors project expenditures for compliance with budgetary guidelines.
  - d. Assists with fiscal year accounting and budget development for projects.
  - e. Provides training and work direction to professional and clerical staff; and distributes work assignments.
  - f. Recommends improvements to products and services.
6. Performs other work as assigned.

#### **D. Reporting Relationships:**

Reports to a program manager. Typically does not supervise but routinely provides technical direction to others in the development and implementation of informational products and activities.

#### **E. Challenges and Problems:**

Challenged to develop an annual plan of projects and activities that fit the agency's goals while conforming to budgetary constraints. This is difficult because it requires projecting the strategies, goals, and policies needed to obtain objectives; projects must often reach different groups of varying ages and educational levels; projects must comply with state regulations and department policies and convey the goals and objectives of the agency; it often requires coordinating cooperative efforts with several individuals or with other agencies; it sometimes requires soliciting community sponsors to assist with activities; and it requires continual evaluation of projects for effectiveness and rehabilitation to correct problems.

Problems include ensuring information is timely and accurate when released, maintaining aptitude in current web technologies and languages, keeping up with the demand for putting information on-line, prioritizing and organizing far-reaching work loads, translating technical jargon into laymen's terms, getting assigned articles returned and reviewed on time to meet publishing deadlines, and managing multiple publication timelines.

#### **F. Decision-making Authority:**

Decisions include recommendations for information and web site projects and the goals and objectives for each; allocation of approved budgets; recommendations for policies and procedures for information activities; who to contact to write articles for specific topics; the content and production deadlines of newsletters; initial drafts of press releases; recommendations for what does or does not go on the web; when to create, delete, or disconnect web pages; how to make web site information most accessible to users; and format, design, and layout of printed products.

Decisions referred include final approval of projects and budget requests, policies and procedures, press releases, web sites, and projects prior to printing; discussion regarding working with the media; web site issues that require Bureau of Information and Telecommunications (BIT) involvement; interpretation of policies regarding web site use and content; and deadlines for publications.

### **G. Contact with Others:**

Daily contact with industry representatives, consumer groups, teachers, and the public to relay information about agency programs and projects; with contractors on layout and design projects to keep them informed about new materials they will be working on and to track contracted projects; and with department staff to keep informed on the latest department issues and information needs; weekly contact with commercial printers to exchange information about printing jobs; with counterparts in cooperative efforts to make sure everyone and everything is on schedule; and with state webmasters to seek assistance with web site development and interpretation of guidelines; monthly contact with BIT programmers to develop web applications and forms; and contact as needed with the news media to disseminate information.

### **H. Working Conditions:**

Works in a typical office environment.

### **I. Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:**

Knowledge of:

- esthetics, principles, and practices of journalism;
- human resources management sufficient to provide advice to others in a specialty area, and to organize effective team efforts;
- prepress and printing processes, and writing print specifications;
- computer software pertinent to desktop publishing and web site development;
- media resources;

Ability to:

- understand and implement web development guidelines and formats established by the state's webmasters;
- organize and prioritize multiple, simultaneous projects with multiple procedures;
- determine project procedures and allocate budgeted funds effectively;
- communicate information clearly and concisely.